Brown — Flag of the Minute Men

SOUVENIR

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19th of April, '75.

FLAG

OF

THE MINUTE MEN

APRIL 19, 1775.

Its Origin and History,

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PUBLISHED BY

BEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

APRIL 19, 1894.

PRESS OF R. H. BLODGETT & CO., 30 BROMFIELD STREET, BOSTON.

To all who share the blessings of

LIBERTY,

This Souvenir of the Opening Revolution

is gratefully inscribed.

"CONQUER OR DIE."

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

—*Emerson.*

The only flag in existence that waved over the "embattled farmers," April 19, '75.—*Boston Journal, March, '94.*

It was originally designed in England in 1660–70, for the three County troops of Middlesex, and became one of the accepted standards of the organized Militia of the State, and as such it was used by the Bedford Company. In my opinion this flag far exceeds in historic value the famed flag of Eutaw and Pulaski's banner, and in fact is the most precious memorial of its kind of which we have any knowledge.

—*William S. Appleton, Mass. Historical Society.*

JANUARY, 1886.

FACTS OF HISTORY.

THE ancient standard of the Massachusetts Militia became the flag of the Minute Men on the morning of April 19, 1775.

In the preceding March, the Town of Bedford voted

"To pay twenty-five Minute men one shilling per week until the first of May, they to exercise four hours in a week, and two shillings to be allowed two officers, they to equip themselves according to the advice of the Provincial Congress,"

which assembled at Concord and of which John Hancock was president.

The officers of the Minute men had no commissions, as did those of the Militia already in service, hence their authority came through the suffrage of their associates.

The time for preparation was limited. They were upon the alert, and were not disconcerted by the cry sent out

"Through every Middlesex village and farm."

"The Regulars are coming."

Delegates from Captain Parker's company, of Lexington, gave the alarm at Bedford. The messengers found a ready response. The men assembled at Fitch's tavern, according to a preconcerted plan. There a lunch was hastily served, where Captain Wilson uttered the memorable words, "It is a cold breakfast, boys, but we'll give the British a hot dinner; we'll have every dog of them before night."

When we consider that the officers of the Minute men were not commissioned, and the uprising voluntary, it is reasonable to account for an improvised flag in use by the Bedford company. The old Standard was in the Page family, and the office of cornet, or color bearer, was a sort of inheritance, hence, Nathaniel Page, aroused by the early messenger, seized the relic of early service and hastened with his associates to the scene of action.

On the arrival of the company at Concord, they assisted in removing stores to places of greater safety. Tradition says that Cornet Page laid down his flag and went to work, and when returning to look for it "found the boys had got it and were playing soldiers.'

"The Bedford companies met with no loss at the bridge, and were all in the pursuit of the retreating enemy. They left the 'Great Fields' at Merriam's Corner and engaged in the attack, then hastened in the pursuit and were in the thickest of the fight near the 'Brooks' Tavern,' where Captain Wilson was killed and Job Lane wounded."

The old flag was returned to the Page mansion and there kept until the centennial celebration at Concord, when it was carried by the Bedford Delegation in the procession of that day. Ten years later, October 19, 1885, the (one hundred and fourth anniversary of the surrender of Cornwallis to Washington) it was presented by Captain Cyrus Page to the Town of Bedford "to be forever in the custody of the Bedford Free Public Library Corporation."

It is sacredly guarded by them as an invaluable memorial. The ravages of time have not entirely spared the delicate fabric, and it is necessarily denied the exposure which a patriotic people would gladly permit.

BEDFORD MILITIA.

Captain, JOHN MOORE.

1st Lieutenant, JOHN MERRIAM.

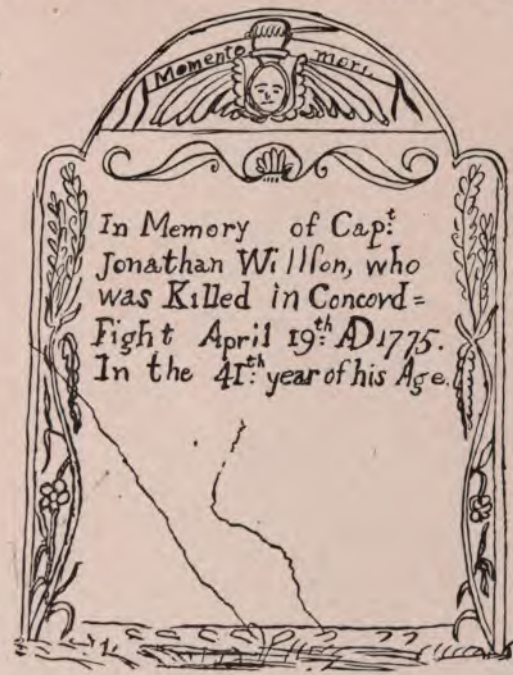
Sergeant, JOSEPH CONVERS.
Sergeant, JAMES WRIGHT.

2nd Lieutenant, ELEAZER DAVIS.

Sergeant, JEREMIAH FITCH, JR.
Fifer, DAVID LANE.

PRIVATES.

James Lane Jr., 3d.
Oliver Reed, Jr.
Samuel Lane.
Israel Putnam, Jr.
Samuel Bacon.
Samuel Davis.
Ebenezer Page.
Thaddeus Davis.
Edward Stearns.
Solomon Stearns.
William Page.
William Maxwell.
Samuel Meads.
Josiah Upton.
Samuel Merriam.
Abel Bowman.
David Fitch.
Abijah Bacon.
Ziba Lane.
Sampson Hardy.
Lemuel Blanchard.
Edward Stearns.



PRIVATES.

Josiah Davis.
Simeon Parker.
Joseph Ross.
Jabez Carter.
John Lane.
Joseph Hartwell.
Thomas Bacon.
John Fitch.
Samuel Lane, Jr.
John Lane, Jr.
Solomon Lane.
Matthew Pollard.
Stephen Lane.
Job Lane, Jr.
Oliver Pollard, Jr.
Jeremiah Willard.
John Reed.
Ebenezer Johnson.
Machias Allen.
Abraham Merriam.
Timothy Page.

BEDFORD MINUTE MEN.

1st Lieutenant, MOSES ABBOTT.

Sergeant, CHRISTOPHER PAGE.
Sergeant, EBENEZER FITCH.

2nd Lieutenant, TIMOTHY JONES.

Sergeant, SETH SAULTMASH.
Sergeant, ASA FASSETT.

PRIVATES.

Joseph Meads, Jr.
Reuben Bacon.
Moses Fitch.
Timothy Johnson.
Ephriam Smith.
Benjamin Winship.

Jabez Russell.
Jonas Gleason.
David Bacon.
Obidiah Johnson.
David Reed.
William Merriam.

Nathan Bacon.
Nathaniel Page, Jr.
Elijah Bacon.
Nathan Bowman.
Asa Duren.

Drummer, Oliver Bacon,

Fifer, Jonas Welch.

This sworn return made by the Lieutenant, some months after the 19th, did not include the Captain, who was killed.

[*George's Cambridge Almanack, for the Year of our Redemption,* 1776.]

ON the 19th of April, 1775, a day to be remembered by all Americans of the present generation, and which ought, and doubtless will be, handed down to ages yet unborn, in which the troops of Britain, unprovoked, shed the blood of sundry loyal American subjects of the British King on the field of Lexington. . . .

The detachment, seeming to thirst for *blood*, wantonly rushed on and first began the hostile scene by firing on this small party, in which they killed eight men on the spot and wounded several others, before any guns were fired upon the troops by our men. . . . Colonel Smith with the detachment then proceeded to Concord where a part of the detachment again made the first fire upon some of the inhabitants of Concord and the adjacent towns, who were collected at a bridge upon this just alarm, and killed two of them and wounded several others before any of the Provincials there had done one hostile act. Then the Provincials (aroused with zeal for the Liberties of their country, finding life and everything dear and valuable at stake) assumed their native valor and returned the fire, and the engagement on both sides began. Soon after which the British troops retreated towards Charlestown (having first committed violence and waste on public and private property). . . . The engagement lasted through the day, many were killed and wounded on each side.

"We never saw anything equal to the intrepidity of the New England minute men."— *Lord Percy.*

"They fought like bears, and I would as soon storm hell as fight them again."— *British Soldier.*

1084

"They poured out their generous blood like water before they knew whether it would fertilize the land of freedom or of bondage"

—*Webster.*

The Immortal Scroll.

APRIL 19, '75.

LEXINGTON.

Nathaniel Wyman.
Jonas Parker.
Robert Monroe.
Samuel Hadley.
Jonathan Harrington.
Isaac Muzzy.
Caleb Harrington.
John Brown.
Jedediah Monroe
John Raymond.

ACTON.

Capt. Isaac Davis.
Abner Hosmer.
James Hayward.

BEDFORD.

Capt. Jonathan Wilson.

WOBURN.

Daniel Thompson.
Asahel Porter

MENOTOMY.

Jason Russell.
Jabez Wyman.
Jason Winship.

SUDBURY.

Josiah Haynes.
Asahel Reed.

DANVERS.

Henry Jacobs.
Samuel Cook.
Ebenezer Goldthwait.
George Southwick.
Benjamin Daland.
Jotham Webb.
Perley Putnam.

LYNN.

Abednego Ramsdell.
William Flint.
Thomas Hadley.
Daniel Townsend.